



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0428WV-1 for Roane County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Roane County's vision for this work is to "transform its students from receivers and reporters of information to masters and practitioners of the learning process." To accomplish this, the district describes a comprehensive approach to implementing personalized learning environments for all of its students that is well-aligned to the work it has already begun in the four assurance areas. Roane County has done a high-quality, in-depth analysis of the problems it faces in each assurance area that are leading to low performance, identifies what steps it has already taken to address them, and whether or not they have been successful. It then uses that information to propose new or expansion solutions through it's RTT-D application proposal, Project U.</p> <p>For example, in the assurance area of standards and assessments Roane County identifies that the alignment of its curriculum, standards, and assessments is poor. In addition, there is a lack of rigorous and advanced coursework. Remediation is required in college at a higher rate for Roane County students than for others in the state. As a result, Roane County has implemented "Roane Right Now," an instructional protocol to promote deeper learning, better instruction, and stronger school culture. They also designed five-year plans to be completed by eighth graders to prepare for their transition to high school, and increased their offering and enrollment of AP courses. The district saw strong results over the last two years since implementing this plan. As a result, through Project U, they plan to further enhance this instructional approach by developing a district-wide curriculum that is focused on students goal setting and skill development. It will be aligned to and based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).</p> <p>This thoughtful and detailed analysis of challenges and solutions should enable Roane County to ensure that they're investing in strategies that will directly impact their most significant areas of need in a credible way that is based on evidence from past experience and lessons learned. In addition, the plan focuses on teacher development and is based on an analysis of why trainings for teachers haven't been successful in the past. The district is taking a new, research-based approach to provide adequate support to all teachers.</p> <p>Overall, the district scores high in this section. It articulates a clear vision of what they are trying to accomplish, and clearly describes the rationale based on a deep-dive into evidence of what's worked (or not worked) in the past. As a result, the district describes a clear and credible approach to implementing personalized learning environments that centers on teachers' ability to accurately assess their students abilities, needs and gaps, and align approaches to instruction that will best meet those needs.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Roane County's approach to implementation is sound and will enable the district to make a dramatic impact on all students. Given that the district is small with only six schools, it makes sense to serve all students in all schools. Through this approach, the district will be able to ensure that students have a consistent experience throughout their school experience as they transition from elementary, to middle, to high school. Serving all students within their six schools is the right approach because, which 67% are low-income, all students are extremely isolated and will be well-served by the access to diverse content and experiences provided through this grant. The district scores high in this section as a result.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Roane County School District will not have the opportunity to scale it's proposal, as they already propose to serve every school and student in the district, so it does not need to propose a high-quality plan for scaling. However, it's theory of change is clearly outlined in section A1, as described in that section's comments. The district has done an in-depth analysis of student and teacher needs, and plans to align its activities to address those needs. For example, the district believes a lack of access to rigorous content that takes students beyond just basic skills is causing them to need remediation in college. As a result, the district has already expanded AP offerings, and through this plan will work with a University partner to ensure their 12th grade benchmarks will prepare students for college-level work. Their logic model is also grounded in</p>		

data demonstrating that some of the pieces of this proposal that have already been implemented in their PLAs are improving results and appear to be effective in impacting student achievement.

Overall, this sub-criterion scores high. The applicant is not able to provide a plan for scaling its proposal as they will already serve every student in the district. they also lay out clear logic model for the programs selected to be implemented and a compelling, data-driven rationale for why they believe these activities will improve student achievement.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district demonstrates evidence that some of these strategies that it has implemented early on and in a select number of schools are starting to show improvement, which gives confidence that this plan will lead to improved student outcomes. In addition, the district is placing an emphasis on teacher support and development, which is the most crucial factor to determining student outcomes.

However, the district does not indicate whether or not the goals it has set are equal to or exceed the state targets, and the goals they propose are mixed in terms of being ambitious and achievable, and some are missing altogether. Therefore, it is uncertain exactly what outcomes the district expects to see. For example:

- The district expects to increase the number of students proficient or above on state assessments by 5% annually. This is ambitious, but achievable given they've shown they can generally achieve 3-4 percentage point gains in a year based on their achievement data. 5% seems reasonable given that it represents slightly higher gains than they've seen previously, for the most part. It is also reasonable that they did not include achievement goals for 2014-15 and 2015-16 as they recognize they will be administering the Smarter Balance Consortium assessments for the first time, creating a new baseline.
- However, there are no goals for the "all students" group in their table for section A4. They only propose goals for each individual subgroup, making it hard to compare gaps to the overall population.
- Roane County indicates that it will measure growth based on value-added data but there are no goals proposed.
- The district also only proposes reading/language arts goals. No math goals are listed.
- For its gap closure goals, the district sets again only reading/language arts goals with no "all students" group. The methodology is also unclear as the district states it is measuring the "percentage difference in WESTEST2 proficiency levels" but it is unclear what they are measuring the percentage difference between, and the goals are confusing given that black students, for example, go from -4% in 2011-12 to 44% in 2012-13. It is difficult to understand how this is being calculated and therefore, impossible to determine reasonableness. In addition, some subgroups do not have an 2011-12 baseline or 2013-14, 2014-15 goals listed.
- There are no graduation rate goals. The district references a table but it does not appear to be included in the application.
- College enrollment goals propose an increase of 3% annually for all students, which seems ambitious and reasonable, however, they do not currently track this information by subgroup.

Overall, a majority of the district's goals are missing, or confusing, and do not seem to be fully thought out. Therefore, it is unclear exactly what outcomes the district expects to see from this proposal, scoring it low in this section. However, the district earns some points for having ambitious and achievable achievement goals for subgroups, and reasonable college enrollment goals for all students.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Roane County is not able to demonstrate a **clear** track record of success over the past four years. There are instances of improved outcomes, but achievement gains are generally mixed and are up some years in some schools, and down in others. When the district implemented new assessments in 2008-09, achievement dropped significantly. For example, at Geary Elementary/Middle achievement went from 72.2% in 2007-08 to 47.8% in 2008-09. It continued to drop the following year to 33.3%. This trend was consistent across all schools. Achievement rose in 2010-11 and 2011-12 in three of six schools. This is not sufficient evidence to indicate a clear track record of success in this past four years.

The district cites a few examples of success in closing gaps at its PLAs (Geary and Spencer). For example, it cites that Geary Elementary/Middle closed the achievement gap for students of low-socioeconomic status by 3.5% in math from 2009-10 to 2010-11, and an additional 7.46% the next year. However, the district does not provide a comprehensive look at achievement gaps to further substantiate a

clear record of success. Roane County includes a detailed table of absolute achievement data in its appendix, and looking at comparisons in absolute achievement between all students and low-ses students, for example, gaps fluctuated somewhat from year to year but overall, remain consistent in the range of a 6-7 percentage point difference. There is no data to clearly illustrate gaps according to the presumed percentage closure method that Roane County describes in the Geary example above.

In terms of achieving significant and ambitious reforms in its persistently lowest achieving schools (PLAs), Roane County has demonstrated some progress among all students in its PLAs, but progress hasn't been consistent. For example, Geary Elementary/Middle in reading showed 33.3% proficiency in 2009-10, 48% in 2010-11, and 44% in 2011-12. So, while results are increasing and significant progress has been made from 2009-10 to 2011-12, there is concern about whether or not the backsliding will continue. The district did take aggressive steps to transform these schools, implementing SIG models in both schools, replacing the principals, and serving as early adopters of the state's new teacher evaluation system.

Roane County has taken steps to ensure that teachers and families have access to student performance data in order to facilitate student learning. For example, parents have access to student benchmark data through Acuity, an online reporting system. It is significant that parents have access to benchmark data as opposed to just summative achievement data, as it will enable them to more closely monitor student learning throughout the year. The district provides a sample data report in its appendix that is clear, and easy to use. It contains bar graphs that clearly track student progress on benchmarks, which is very helpful.

Overall, the district scores medium-low in this section. While it has demonstrated some significant academic progress, it is largely inconsistent across schools and from year to year. and because of the impact of the new, more rigorous state assessment in 2009, the district is not able to show progress over four years. In addition, ambitious steps were taken to reform the district's PLAs and they are seeing some results, but again, they aren't consistent across years and subgroups. The district earns some points for the progress it has made, and for its efforts to equip parents and teachers with usable, timely information on student progress.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Roane County Board of Education issues an annual financial statement that is published in the local newspaper. It contains, by school, a total of deposits and receipts and individual salaries of employees. Other data is available upon request through open records. The district included the sample report from the newspaper in its appendix, and it appears that names and salaries are included but there is no information about the position held by each individual. Therefore, the district does not demonstrate sufficient transparency in reporting teacher salaries only, vs. the salaries of other instructional staff. It also does not appear to report non-personnel expenditures publicly. As a result, the district scores low in this section but earns some points for its public transparency with fiscal data in the newspaper and for reporting individual salaries.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	4
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district describes very little in terms of the legal, or regulatory flexibility that it has or needs to execute this plan. Based on what is described, there may not be much additional autonomy needed, but the district still leaves this in question by not describing what, if any, flexibility it thinks it needs. The one piece it mentions is around offering the teachers voluntary summer contracts, which is permitted by policy, as explained by the district. The state reviewed and offered feedback on the district's proposal but does not offer overall support or address any of the questions about district autonomy to implement. However, their comments don't raise any concerns with district autonomy or its ability to execute their plan in a legal or regulatory context, other than to express concern that the district can't require teachers to participate in summer training.

Overall, the district scores medium in this section. It earns some points for identifying it's ability to offer teachers summer contracts should they choose to take them, and it does not seem like there are significant pieces of their plan that will require specific legal or regulator flexibility, but since it is somewhat unclear, the district generally scores low.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Roane County sufficiently demonstrates that it has engaged in meaningful stakeholder engagement with its teachers in the development of its proposal, seeking both initial information to inform thinking, and then additional feedback on the draft plan. For example, the district distributed a survey to teachers prior to developing its proposal to seek their input on both their needs and the needs of their students. The top three needs identified were 1) technology training, 2) support in implementing the common core state standards, and 3) increased parent engagement. There are components of the district's plan that clearly seek to address these identified areas of need. However, only 55% of teachers took the survey so it wasn't representative of the vast majority of teachers. The district also brought the final proposal

before a vote at each school building and at that point, 88% of teachers voted in favor of the plan, showing significant support from teachers for the final proposal.

However, there is no evidence that they engaged parents and students in the development of their plan. They raised awareness and generated support by having a booth at football games and Boy Scout festivals, but did not demonstrate how they received input into the development of the plan from these groups.

The district shows wide support from community members, including letters of support from its senators, governor, state legislature, students, Apple, Inc., the local technology center, and Save the Children.

Overall, the district scores medium-high in this section as it demonstrates significant stakeholder support for the proposal, and meaningful teacher engagement in its development. However, it loses some points for demonstrating how it engaged parents, students, and other external stakeholders in the development of the plan.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The district does not propose a clear, high-quality plan for assessing its current status in implementing personalized learning environments. Roane County clearly demonstrates that it has done some analysis to this end, as evidenced in section A1 where it identifies challenges, solutions implemented to date, results and proposed next steps. It is also clear that they have thought through their logic model, and have designed activities to address their needs. For example, in this section the district identifies its three key needs (student engagement in goal setting and tracking progress, teacher collaboration both vertically and horizontally, and alignment of standards, curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy), proposes solutions, and identifies the structures and people necessary to implement those solutions, indicating components of a high-quality plan. It does not, however, identify exactly how it determined its needs, or what its plan is for assessing its implementation status moving forward. As a result, the district scores in the medium range in this section.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The district proposes a high-quality plan for executing personalized learning environments for students. They clearly identify the projects, timelines, goals, and owners for each piece of the proposal. Overall, the district plans to implement some good structures that will allow students to personalize their educational experiences, and will support teachers in facilitating and leading this learning. However, there are also some specific details lacking that would help create a better understanding of how the proposal would be executed to ensure success for students.</p> <p>C1a: The district plans to implement a set of structures that will support students in managing their own learning, but does not sufficiently describe how this will be executed. For example, Roane County plans to have students set goals and track their progress in their personalized electronic portfolios (PEPs) to build investment in what they're learning. They describe using the state's Common Core Standards rubric to align their lessons and be transparent with students about this alignment to help them understand what they're learning, why, they're learning it, and how it relates to their future goals. However, while it appears that students will measure progress against mastery of common core standards, it is unclear exactly what they will set goals on, and how frequently they will track them.</p> <p>In order to provide students with experiences that align with their interests, the district plans to implement place-based learning experiences that will allow students to undertake projects in the community that interest them. A contractor will also be hired to support teachers in developing projects and aligning them to the common core standards. In addition, the district will provide students access and exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives through online experiences on their individual iPads, such as virtual field-trips, and will use Tandberg systems to communicate across districts and outside the state. This videoconferencing system is a promising tool to connect students to peers in other places. Both of these online experiences should serve to gain students exposure to important experiences that they can't get in their isolated community. Through place-based learning, peer-to-peer conferencing structures (though the specifics of what this entails is lacking), and a life-skills component to the PEP, the district includes sufficient supports to develop critical thinking skills and other important traits such as teamwork, and problem-solving.</p> <p>C1b: The district describes how it will vertically align and sequence its curriculum, and how its professional cadre (similar to a district leadership team) will work with a select group of teachers to align standards, assessments, and pedagogy with this curriculum. However, the proposal lacks specifics as to how students will develop their own personalized sequence for accessing this curriculum. It is clear that they will have individualized goals and plans, but it is unclear what these will entail and how students will access curriculum accordingly. We also know they will have access to iPads to use online content to augment class lessons through iTunes and Khan Academy, as well</p>		

as place-based learning experiences. But the full picture as to how students will align their plans with all of the resources available to create a personalized sequence of content is unclear. While the PEP holds promise for students in tracking their own goals and progress, it is unclear how meaningful the feedback will be as a result because the proposal does not describe how students will use these, how often they will be updated, or how they will be revised to reflect their needs at any given time. It is presumed that the three district facilitators that Roane County plans to hire will play a role in aligning all of the resources into a cohesive instructional approach, but the plan for doing so is unclear. However, the district does outline strong elements for ensuring resources are accessible and adaptable for all students, including those with disabilities (there are no ELL students in the district). For example, they are able to provide additional literacy resources to students who are far behind through the Save the Children program.

C1c: Roane County plans to contract with a technology provider for professional development on using technology. The district also plans to hire a technology coordinator and technology assistant to help with this as well. However, it is unclear if this PD is for teachers or students, and if they plan to have teachers train the students or if the vendor will do this. There is not sufficient evidence to feel confident that this plan will be successful.

Overall, the district scores medium-high in this section. They outline a high-quality plan for implementing personalized learning environments that includes clear milestones, goals, and owners. The plan includes strong elements that, if executed well, will foster more individualized learning for students. However, the details are missing that would help clarify how these pieces will be used (particularly the PEPs, and how they will be used to create a personalized sequence of learning) and integrated with one another. Without this information, the plan seems somewhat disjointed and the district runs the risk of having all of these new structures and tools, but not using them coherently enough to drive improvement in student outcomes.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district outlines a high-quality plan to teaching and learning through the outcomes matrix included in its appendix. This plan includes deliverables, goals, timelines, and owners, making it clear what they plan to execute and how. This plan includes some strong components designed to improve teachers' abilities to structure a personalized learning environment for students, and develop their skills in utilizing technology to improve student learning. However, there are some critical components lacking, and some risk involved in their approach that keeps it from earning a perfect score. The strengths and weaknesses of the district's plan to support teaching and leading are outlined in the sections below.

C2a: Roane County has a strong plan to lead teachers in professional learning communities through which teachers will share strategies and analyze data. They will also have an opportunity to observe each other and provide feedback through a community of practice model. In order to facilitate these structures, the district will hire a program director and three facilitators who will be trained for at least 100 hours during the spring 2013 semester by a university partner and a technical assistance provider to be determined through an RFP. These individuals will support professional learning communities and will be in classrooms daily. This is a smart strategy for ensure consistent, ongoing, job-embedded learning. However, the risk involved in ensuring the right people are hired and the contractors hired are able to provide the support needed is high. In summer workshops, teachers will get specific training on adapting content to meet students' needs as one component of a series of courses. The plan states that teachers will develop curriculum adapted to the common core, which they will "enhance with student-centered activities." These explanations do not provide sufficient detail to understand how teachers will be equipped to adapt content to meet student needs.

To frequently measure student progress, the district will develop formative assessments and will receive training on using this data to improve their practice. It also appears the data will be housed online for easy access by teachers and parents. Teachers will discuss this data together in PLCs. Principals will be equipped with evaluation data as the district plans to implement the state's new teacher evaluation system district-wide through this proposal. Principals and facilitators will collect data on "eWalks" using a tool that identifies 16 components to look for in an effective classroom, and will give immediate feedback to teachers after the walkthroughs. This system was designed by the current Superintendent and is attributed to the progress made in the schools that used it last year. Finally, facilitators and principals will use an instructional practices inventory to assess the level of student engagement in teachers' classrooms. All of the tools described will work together to provide both teachers, students, parents and administrators with frequent data about student progress, as well as about teacher practice that will help improve instructional continually and ensure effective PLCs.

C2b: In order to match student needs to resources in a meaningful way, the district plans to analyze summative assessments, match learning modules to student needs, and then use formative assessment data to determine what is working and which resources are the best fit for students. This is a strong strategy for continually assessing effectiveness of resources and ensuring students are continually matched with optimal learning approaches. In addition, to ensure the resources students have are high-quality, teachers will be trained to integrate new technologies (tablets, apps, web-based modules, PEPs) into lesson plans. Teachers will have a sense of what's working from their analysis of summative and then benchmark data, and then will have the proper training to know how to use and build these resources into their lessons.

C2c: Roane County plans to train principals and district leaders through the contractors to be hired, and then have them participate in

summer training with teachers to ensure they have the same knowledge and skills as teachers and can support them in implementing these practices. The risk involved with this is that the success of this plan is solely in the hands of the contractor identified and it is unclear if there are contractors that have sufficient knowledge and expertise to support teachers and principals across such a wide array of topics and skills. Principals, district leaders, and facilitators will have data from the teacher evaluation system, PEPs, formative assessments, and other data at their disposal to support them in continuous improvement.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While Roane County outlines a high-quality plan for implementation, that plan does not address the policies and infrastructure in that plan that will support its implementation. However, the applicant does outline a variety of structures it has in place that will serve it well in implementation. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a 2010 audit, it was determined that the district central office structure impeded the district's ability to provide "continued and sustained leadership to schools." As a result, Roane County recruited a new Superintendent who has developed a district leadership team that includes a Director of Personnel, a Director of Special Education, and a Curriculum Coordinator, all of which will serve in the professional cadre to provide oversight of implementation. • While the district does not describe the specific autonomies principals will have, they have given autonomy to principals in their SIG schools over staffing, budget, etc. So there is a precedent of allowing this kind of flexibility, which is promising. In addition, the PLC groups will advise the professional cadre monthly on needs in terms of scheduling, staffing, budgets, etc. bringing on the ground perspective to the leadership team, which is important to ensuring they're in touch with the realities of implementation at the school level. • The district is implementing a policy to move to a hybrid grading system based both on grades and content mastery. This is an important step towards being transparent about student learning and focusing more on mastery of content. The district's plan describes multiple ways in which students can demonstrate mastery, for example through group activities, place-based learning, and journaling. However, it doesn't sufficiently articulate how they will have repeated opportunities to demonstrate mastery. • The learning modules developed by teachers will have differentiating built in to ensure they are accessible by all students. In addition, the SPED Director will engage in the development of these modules. This will help ensure that students of varying needs and abilities can access these resources. However, there is not a high-quality plan in place to outline how this will happen. <p>Overall, the district scores medium-high in this section. They have some strong policies in place to ensure the effective implementation of the personalized learning environments, but are lacking details on a few key pieces, including what autonomies principals will have, and how students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery. In addition, they lack a high-quality plan detailing the policies in place and those they want to implement.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Roane County plans to ensure all students, regardless of income, have access to technology by providing iPads for students to use in school and at home. In addition, they go the extra step to provide hot spots or air cards to students who do not have internet access at home. This is critical to ensuring students can make the most out of technology outside the classroom.</p> <p>Teachers and students will have access to tech support during the day through a technology coordinator. In addition, PLC groups and the technology coordinator will put on workshops to train parents in technology use, and on understanding the standards-based grading system. Students will also have a specific orientation session to train them in using the technology provided. This represents a fairly comprehensive support plan regarding technology, however it is unclear how parents and students will get help at home in the evenings if they are having difficulty with the technology. A hotline or some other way to access support would be helpful.</p> <p>Parents and students will have access to data through an electronic platform that will be developed through Project U to house the PEPs as well as to cull together other data that is available through the state's student information system. The formative</p>		

data that parents will receive through Acuity, as mentioned previously, is also helpful in assessing student progress. It is a little confusing to make sense of all of the different portals and pieces of data, but it seems that parents and students have access to most of the data that teachers do.

There is no mention of interoperable data systems in this section. Roane County only mentions that they are able to pull data from the state's student information system and feed it into their own systems, but it is unclear if the district has interoperable student data, payroll, and HR systems.

Overall, the district scores high in this section as it has a strong plan to ensure access to technology for students and parents, has some strong tech support and training processes in place during the school day, and makes a variety of data available to students, parents, and teachers. However, it loses some points for not providing families with access to tech support outside the school day and because there is not a clear, high-quality plan outlined regarding LEA infrastructure. Such a plan might have helped clarify what pieces of data are available and through what systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Roane County outlines a high-quality plan for a strategy to continuously improve implementation based on measuring the impact of individual projects. This plan will enable them to get timely feedback throughout the grant period. For example, the district describes that the selected university partner (UP) will assess the effectiveness and continued alignment of the curriculum developed half way through the grant and make recommendations for changes. The technical assistance provider and UP will also review the learning modules on a rolling basis, and will redesign or remove them as needed. The UP will also validate formative assessments for alignment to the common core and college-ready standards. In addition, they will assess teachers following the summer training to ensure that they can demonstrate the skill and understanding they were to gain from the training and will use this assessment to adjust the training moving forward. The district outlines a comprehensive plan like the examples provided here for assessing each of its activities.</p> <p>However, the district does not provide a sufficient plan for making this information available to the public. They will issue periodic updates to the school board; however, this is not sufficient. There should be some mechanism for ongoing communication of progress, lessons learned, and adjustments being made that is more readily accessible.</p> <p>Overall, the district scores high in this section for outlining very specific strategies for continually monitoring all of its activities and collecting data to use to make adjustments. The strategies it outlines are frequent enough to ensure that it can continually adjust. However, the district loses some points for not making its findings more transparent.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Roane County has committed to ongoing internal communication efforts about the work in this proposal through its PLC structures, and district-wide meetings that will be held on teacher work days. Through these structures, the district will be able to continually get feedback from teachers, and keep them informed on the progress of initiatives. In addition, it will create an electronic billboard to post announcements and updates. Externally, the district will engage parents through goal setting meetings each year, and at parent-teacher meetings. They will also develop a district-wide website and newsletter specifically about Project U. However, despite these structures that will help support ongoing communication, the district describes very little opportunity for ongoing engagement with stakeholders besides teachers. It does not have sufficient mechanisms to seek parent, student, and community feedback.</p> <p>Overall, the district scores medium-high in this section as it has a comprehensive set of structures to communicate with internal and external stakeholders. However, it loses points for a lack of ongoing engagement opportunities, particularly for external stakeholders.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Roane County's goals are mixed in terms of ambitious and achievable.</p>		

- On state assessments, they propose growing by 3% per year, which is reasonable and ambitious.
- The district sets a goal of 100% of participating students having a highly effective teacher and principal by the 2012-13 school year. There is concern about the baseline, which is listed at 92%. Given the educational outcomes in the district, there is concern that the system used to set this baseline is not capturing an accurate reflection of teaching quality, and therefore raises concern about the district's ability to get to 100% so quickly.
- On the district's AIMSWeb assessments, they propose decreasing the number of students scoring below the benchmark by 3% annually, which seems ambitious and achievable.
- Students with disabilities have large performance gaps when compared to all students, particularly in grades 4-8 and high school. It would seem that the district should be aiming to grow these students at a faster rate to catch up to their peers, but that is not reflected in the district's metrics in this section.
- The district plans to increase the number of students completing a FAFSA by 3% per year. Given the baseline is currently 12%, it seems that in order to be considered ambitious, the district would need to set measures that increase FAFSA completion faster.

In addition, the only leading indicators proposed are on AIMSWeb and STAR assessments. The rest will not provide data in a timely manner to make adjustments mid-course. The district also does not include information about how they will reflect upon and revise these measures over time to ensure they are effectively providing the district with useful information.

Overall, this section scores low because many of the performance measures are not ambitious and/or achievable and do not provide sufficient leading data.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Roane County outlines a comprehensive, high-quality plan in section E1 that satisfies the requirements in this section for a plan to evaluate and adjust course continually. See the comments in E1 for additional information about the measures the applicant will track for each activity. However, the district does not have a long-term, research based component to its application nor does it describe how it will work to more productively use staff time, money or other resources. However, it still scores in the medium range because of the strong continuous improvement plan outlined in E1.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Some elements of the applicant's budget seem reasonable and sufficient, such as salaries, and travel, for example. However, there are some components of their plan that are lacking sufficient detail. For example, the district describes an expense of \$1.3 million for tablets, but does not provide a specific breakdown of what they're budgeting for each tablet and how many they're buying. This would help determine whether that expense is necessary and reasonable. In addition, they describe several services that will be provided through the technology budget but don't fully describe them or their specific costs.</p> <p>Some of the projects discussed in the application do not appear to be in the budget. For example, the district describes creating an online platform for electronic portfolios but does not clearly include costs to do so (unless they are in the equipment section but are not clearly identified). In addition, there are no costs in the budget to support place-based learning or online content through Khan Academy. The district also does not provide sufficient rationale to explain its thinking around one-time vs. ongoing costs. It mentions that it would like to keep the staff it has hired beyond the life of the grant but does not propose a plan for doing so. It also does not include specific budget breakdowns by each project in order to provide a full picture of the funding required for each piece of their proposal.</p> <p>Overall, the district's budget proposal scores medium-low because while some of the costs are clear and reasonable, the budget is lacking sufficient information to provide a comprehensive picture of all costs associated with the proposal.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes its sustainability strategy as placing an emphasis on building the capacity of its teachers and leaders to carry the work forward beyond the life of the grant. While this is generally a good approach to sustainability, it would have helped if they had described</p>		

some of the other ongoing costs and a strategy to sustain them, such as the positions they want to retain and the ongoing technology support costs. The district does point to its past success in leveraging public funds (SIG, SEED, and GEAR UP) and explains that it will seek i3 funding and Promise Neighborhood funding to sustain the plan. However, this is not a sufficient strategy to ensure sustainability of all aspects of this work, nor is it reliable. The district will also pursue private funding to support its proposal's sustainability, which, if they can demonstrate success over the grant period, is a more reasonable strategy.

Overall, the district has some ideas on sustainability, but does not propose a high-quality plan to this end and as a result, scores medium-low.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a clear and coherent system of integrated support for students based on the Harvard Family Research Project's *complementary learning approach*. Through this approach, the district will systematically integrate both school and non-school supports. The district describes a variety of integrated services that are provided and/or will be provided to students in the district to support the overall plan. For example:

- A partnership with Save the Children to provide literacy supports both during the school day and afterschool, that includes a nutritional and physical fitness component.
- A WV Early Steps program to provide early learning opportunities to 100 students from birth to age 5.
- School-based health clinics in some schools
- Westbrook Health Services provide mental health services to students and families.
- Roane County schools will also seek to partner with a healthcare provider to conduct health screenings at school.
- A Parent Action Committee will be established to educate other parents on using student data, organize activities outside of schools, among other things.
- A partnership with Roane Jackson Technology Center to provide career and technical education to students in high school.

However, despite this comprehensive description of varied, integrated services that will support the district's plan, it is unclear how these partnerships and services are funded and whether there are resources available to sustain them.

The district describes sufficient performance measures for these partnerships, outlining the desired results to be achieved from this collective effort in terms of both educational (for example, "students successfully transition from middle to high school") and family and community goals (for example, "families and communities support learning in Roane County Schools"). In addition, the applicant then takes these desired outcomes and breaks them down into specific, measurable metrics for each age group and they identify the partnerships that have primary responsibility for achieving those results. This level of detail will help ensure that the district has good data to measure the impact of these partnerships. Once it has this data, the district will use it to match results to a needs assessment of children and families to determine if services are addressing needs or if there are gaps. This is a thoughtful and high-quality approach to continuously assessing these services to ensure they're meeting student needs. They will also develop focus groups with residents and county leaders to get feedback on needs and the supports provided, which is a positive step towards ensuring community needs are met, and not just those of students and parents, and to improving services over time.

In order to ensure full integration of these partnerships and the school experience, partners will be invited to PLCs as needed to talk about integration, and learn about what is happening in the classroom to better align their supports accordingly. In addition, the school district will incorporate the non-academic indicators identified in this section in the student's PEP, which is a smart strategy to ensure a comprehensive view of student needs and progress. In order to ensure decision-making and oversight over the partnerships and integration opportunities, the district has developed leadership teams at various levels who will be responsible for analyzing data and determining next steps (they will exist at the county, school, and parent level).

Overall, the district describes a strong and coherent system of integrated supports for students and families that will enhance the broader proposal. The social, emotional, and health needs of students as well as supplementary learning opportunities, are critical to ensuring success for students in poverty and those that are significantly behind their peers. Therefore, the district scores high in this section. It does not earn full point, however, because it does not describe where the resources for these partnerships come from and how they will be sustained.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Roane County Schools meets the absolute priority by coherently and comprehensively describing a personalized learning environment throughout its application that builds on its work in the four assurance areas. The district proposes some strong strategies for providing individualized learning for students, and places an appropriately strong emphasis on the development of its teachers. Some of the key personalized learning approaches it proposes are:

- Teacher development of individualized learning modules (though there is some confusion if these are teacher-delivered or online, or both).
- Development of personalized education portfolios (PEPs) to allow for individualized goal setting and tracking.
- Engaging students in upper grades in selecting their own learning modules and paths to attain mastery of content.
- Introducing standards-based grading in middle grades.
- Integrating place-based project learning into classrooms.
- Having 8th grades develop a 5-year plan to aid their transition to high school.

Throughout, teachers will have intense support in implementing this environment through rigorous summer training provided by a third party, and ongoing support through PLCs, and one-on-one coaching from the three facilitators to be hired.

While there are some shortcomings of each of the proposed elements, as described throughout the comments in this application, overall the applicant's strategies are comprehensive and well-thought out. There is a high likelihood that this plan, if executed with fidelity, will increase outcomes for students in the district.

Total	210	135
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	10

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Roane County is proposing, through its optional budget request, to implement "Literacy Boost," a year-round supplementary literacy program for students most in need of additional literacy instruction that will take place outside the school day. The rationale behind this approach, as described by the district, is that there is a high risk associated with failure to read by the third grade and students who find themselves in this position tend to have a difficult time catching up throughout their academic career. Therefore, it is reasonable to place an emphasis on ensuring that students meet this milestone and while not particularly innovative, it seems like a smart use of this additional budget supplement and will provide a strong complement to the work of the applicant's main proposal. In addition, while afterschool and summer school components have been traditional elements of many districts across the country, there are few proof points of success and very mixed results. Therefore, it would be interesting to allow Roane County to experiment with this approach and possibly provide a proof point for rural communities on how to execute these programs effectively.

In its proposal, the applicant includes a high-quality plan that explains that the program will serve 240 students in grades K-6 with year-round, high-quality, out-of-school learning opportunities. The applicant clearly describes the instructional model to be used, the types of activities that will take place (through varied structures such as modeling, coaching, project-based, goal setting, collaboration, and small group settings, as examples). It also describes how it will take different approaches than those used during the school day to ensure diverse opportunities for students and to create a welcoming, secure environment. It would be a good comparison point for the district to look at what structures and approaches worked well in this program vs. their in-school program and could possibly enable them to take the best elements of both and improve their plan beyond the life of the grant. The district outlines clear milestones and timelines for implementation and sets additional goals for students in this program around STAR and AR assessment proficiency that are ambitious and

reasonable.

The budget for this proposal totals \$1.6 million and the detailed costs contained within the budget narrative seem necessary and reasonable to executing the proposal. Specifically, the district plans to provide funds for transportation for all students, which is critical to ensuring the success of this program. In addition, they plan to hire a staff member to oversee the program and, more importantly, ensure consistency with Project U. The district also identifies other funds that it will contribute to the project, including a USDA meal reimbursement program to provide snacks and meals, and some bus costs for the after school component to be provided from the district's general fund.

The main concern with this optional supplement is that it does not propose a particularly innovative solution, nor does it work across two districts, as is required in the selection criteria. While the proposal has many strong points, as outlined above, it scores in the medium range because of these two deficiencies.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0428WV-2 for Roane County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Moderate Evidence articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision for Project U was evident. Project U provided evidence that it was building on a professional development model and its success to develop a district-wide curriculum. Evidence of developing, retaining, and recruiting effective teachers, principals, and leaders shared included the new leadership, professional development, and contracting for teacher supports in curriculum. Building data systems was evident in the Project U vision by supporting a student 1:1 use of tablet computers that would serve as Personalized Electronic Portfolios (PEP) of a student's achievement throughout the entire span of their academic career. Moderate Evidence was provided to support the Comprehensive Vision to adopt standards and assessments. The applicant noted that ACT Explore and PLAN approach to learning helped improve student achievement in the 8th and 10th grade, but lacking was how this knowledge of achievement success was informing the Project U vision across other grade levels. Roane County Schools did not make AYP for school year 2010-2011 and only 2 of the schools met AYP status. Weak Evidence in the Comprehensive and Coherent Vision was how the "lessons learned" of the schools meeting and not meeting AYP were actually clearly informing the vision.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Compelling Evidence was provided that Project U is designed to be a district-wide reform that includes all six Roane County District schools and that they meet the Race to the Top District competition's eligibility requirements serving 2,332 students with over 40% of those participating being from low-income families. A total of 178 educators will be participating in the project and as noted in the tables this is 100%.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Project U is a district-wide approach to improving student learning outcomes and will be implemented throughout all six Roane County District schools. The outcome goals are intended to bring about systemic change that will be accomplished over the course four years, which represents a realistic and innovative approach to education reform. The overall mission of Project U is to ensure Roane County High School graduates are college and career ready. The goals that support this mission are: 1) An enhanced curriculum and formative assessments will be vertically aligned and mapped to state standards and assessments; 2) All District educators will meet state standards for highly effective teachers and principals; and 3) Every Roane County student will have a personalized learning experience informed by individual skills and goals.</p>		

Strong Evidence of a high-quality plan was located in the Outcome Goals Matrix in the Appendix which provided specific detailing regarding the Goals, Activities, Deliverables, Timeline, and the persons responsible. It was itemized out for each of the goals regarding enhanced curriculum, educators meeting state standards, and personalized learning experiences. Not evident in the plan was the technology access timeline and activities specifically supporting the educators and principals.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Weak and Incomplete Evidence was provided in this section by the applicant for setting ambitious and achievable goals. Reading/Language Arts Goals were provided until 2013-2014 and then when the Smarter Balance Assessment is to be implemented and beyond the goals were void. Evidence of decreasing achievement gaps was provided in Language Arts for subgroups over each year of the project except for the Smarter Balance Assessment Post grant year. Table A(4)(c) regarding Graduation rates was not found in the document. Later in the document it was noted that raising the high school graduation rates has remained consistent for the last four years: 2011-2012 -76.40%; 2010-2011 - 76.8%; 2009-2010 - 77.7%; 2008-2009 - 78.2%. No evidence regarding subgroup rates were provided. Increasing high school graduation rates will be a focus of Project U with a goal of reaching 90%. College Enrollment rates for graduates (subgroups not available) were evident for all years.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Weak Evidence was provided to demonstrate a clear track record of success over the past 4 years to advance student learning and achievement. More specifically Roane County's scores declined when the new WESTEST2 assessment was presented to the school system in 2008-2009. None of the schools in 2011-2012 have returned to the level of student proficiency in reading or math that was present during the 2007-2008 school year. Reed Elementary had the highest level of students meeting proficiency in 2011-2012 for Reading (55.56%) and in math(42.86%). Mixed evidence of success in closing achievement gaps was noted across grade levels and school. Graduation rates have dipped slightly over the past 4 years- 2008-2009 (78.2%) to 2011-2012 (76.40%). Reforms in the lowest performing schools included replacement of the principal and hiring of an Assistant Principal for School Improvement. A Title I Parent Coordinator was also hired for each school to serve as a liaison between the home and school, and to help plan and execute parent activities and interactions with staff. Evidence of access to data results from the WESTEST2 assessments, report cards, and more is through the EdLine online reporting system for stakeholders.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Compelling Evidence in the Appendix and in the application of the high level of transparency in the LEA processes, practices, and investments. Notable was that Roane County Board of Education publishes its annual financial statements in the Roane County Reporter. The financial statements include a schedule, by school, of total deposits and receipts. The individual salaries of all persons paid by the Board of Education for the year are also published at this time. Because Roane County Schools is a public entity, all of the information, both at the school and county level is always available upon request.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strong Evidence was shared that Roane County Schools is able to implement all components of this Project U proposal with support from the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia State Board of Education, and the Roane County Board of Education. Noted in the materials was Faculty Senate meetings where votes took place to support the application with a majority vote. It was noted in the application that 88% of teachers voted in support of the Project U design. Letters of support included a representative of a technology company, Governor, Roane County Board of Education, support agencies, and students. Evident was one group against the application by the Reed Elementary faculty Senate.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strong Evidence was shared in the application that Project U vision was presented to Roane County School teachers at each school on October 3 and again on October 11, 2012 with 88% of teachers indicating support through a vote at each building of the Faculty Senate body. Community informational booths at events that included the football game, Boy Scout gatherings, and Board of Education meetings were all venues to engaging development in the plan. In addition a survey of support needs to teachers was also evident in the application and areas noted as areas of challenge were incorporated into the plan. Letters of support from key community entities and parents attending informational sessions on the plan were all included. Higher education and libraries all conveyed support in the plan through letters. Less Evident were the collection of comments at the gatherings and comments that were incorporated into the plan. For example the Reed Elementary Faculty Senate discussion of parents concerned of excessive summer technology training.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Strong Evidence of a high quality plan in implementing a personalized learning environment was evolved from Roane County Schools experience with two current protocols focused on personalized learning. These were Roane Right Now and the five year plans for eighth grade students. Additional insight to the plan comes from the current school improvement grant reforms that include the revised educator performance evaluation system, PLCs, data books, a math interventionist, and professional development on student engagement through partnership with Solution Tree and Marshall University. The logic of the plan included evaluating gaps based upon surveys and audits that included teacher professional development and ongoing support in goal setting, common core standards, project-based and placed-based teaching strategies, use of technology, and PLCs. The organizational structure with related timelines was also included for technical assistance providers, a project director, facilitators, teacher leaders, and professional learning communities. Less Evident in the plan was whether there was a phase or varied timeline to roll-out the reforms to all the schools.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Students and parents will meet with the teachers at the start of each school year to develop personalized learning plans and to set educational goals that will be reviewed and revised throughout the Project U grant period and beyond. Project U will contract with a technical assistance provider and a University partner to train teachers in pedagogy, curriculum alignment, as well as new instructional approaches including collaborative, project-based, and place based learning. During the Spring 2013 planning period, these partners will work with the professional cadre to develop and provide modules in core academic areas which address reading/writing, mathematics and numeracy skills, as well as classroom management and motivation. They will train teachers to utilize new instructional approaches as part of the pedagogical process that personalizes student learning while aligning with common core standards. Individual tablets will be used by ALL students to access a digital platform which contains high quality content that gives students exposure and introduction to, as well as awareness of, college and career-ready standards. Students and parents will work with teachers to develop personalized learning plans and educational goals based on the assessment data above and student's individual interests.

Moderate Evidence was presented regarding the use of technical support and professional development for curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices for the educators. The applicant also has a history with personalized learning and curriculum development by which they are building on and incorporating into the plan. As shared by the applicant Project U will build problem based curriculum and other lessons to enhance personalization of the materials and to be inclusive of bringing in diverse cultures and materials into the classroom. Weak Evidence was presented regarding the mechanisms to provide training and support to the students that will ensure they understand how to use the tools. A concern is the applicant's lack of evidence regarding whether the curriculum being developed through the school and district was going to be accessible and available to the student and parents for continued beneficial learning outside the classroom, either in person or through the use of the personalized learning device.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strong Evidence was provided by the applicant that all educators in the district will be trained by the Project Director and District Facilitators

to build a curriculum. All teachers will also be trained on how to work with students and parents on using assessments to identify skills and to set goals. Identification of skills and goals will allow teachers to work with students to select the curriculum enhancements that best meet their academic strengths, needs, and interests. Teachers will receive this training during the summer workshop series and with ongoing support throughout the year. Currently two thirds of Roane schools currently use the new educator performance evaluation system that has 16 different components in a classroom that it identifies. These components include student engagement and instructional strategies. Also being used is an Instructional Practice Inventories (IPI) to assess levels of student engagement and through a community of practice model, teachers are assessing each other's class and providing feedback and recommendations for improvement.

Moderate Evidence was provided to support teachers in implementing all of the changes to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. All of the teachers will be a part of regularly scheduled PLCs with regular meetings to review student data and teacher evaluation data and provide suggestions and other feedback will help gauge the effectiveness of Project U's new resources and teaching methods. Summer Workshop Series and continuous improvement practices during the subsequent years will assist teachers in implementation. It is not evident or clear in the plan that summer and ongoing planning PLC will be adequate for all of the curriculum, assessment, and instructional changes being planned district-wide.

Moderate Evidence of the leadership team having the training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment was presented. This applicant has identified a professional cadre that will be established comprised of the Project Director, District Facilitators, District Leadership Team including the District Superintendent, Director of Personnel, Director of Federal Programs and Child Nutrition, Director of Special Education, and six school principals. The professional cadre will participate in a spring planning period with all external providers reviewing goals, activities, deliverables and timeline for Project U. Of concern is that No Evidence was shared or noted regarding this Professional cadre currently or in the past implementing technology in a district-wide approach with so many curriculum, instruction, and assessment changes. It was also not clear how technology and personalized learning devices are currently being used across the district.

Moderate Evidence was noted regarding the applicants plan to increase instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. Much of this evidence resides in the current piloting and use of the educator evaluation system. The applicants plan is to use professional development to create and support the development of highly effective teachers and principals internally. This internal staff development will also include the development of math, reading, and special education specialists. It is not clear through university partnership or professional development activities that this could be done as shared in the plan presented.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Infrastructure for Project U actually started in 2011 through the hiring of a new superintendent and school improvement team's conducting the walkthrough evaluations. For this project the superintendent will supervise, direct, and manage all employees associated with the grant including the program manager, district facilitators, and additional technical assistance providers (including technology specialists that will assist with implementation). The district treasurer will oversee all financial grant transactions, manage payroll, and manage all sub-grants. The district's directors associated with curriculum, federal programs, special education, student services, as well as coordinators of curriculum, technology, and literacy and math specialists will work with the professional cadre to ensure implementation of Project U. An essential ingredient to the success of Project U is the school-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that include all of the teachers, including the teacher leaders. Currently the schools are moving from letter grades to standards based with the goal over the life of the grant are to move to a complete standards based reporting system aligned fully with college and career-level expectations. The plan also includes a variety of ways that the students will demonstrate mastery and will and will include special education teachers to assist in modifying curriculum and assessments to meet the needs of all students.</p> <p>Overall a Moderate Level of Evidence supporting the extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide the system supports in needs. A real strength is in the organizational leadership and hierarchy of the system and that work regarding this more responsive system has already started. Strength evidence is the recognition of the importance of the professional learning communities to supporting and promoting this work and the inclusion of special education to assist in modifications when needed. The applicant is also recognized for the transition from traditional based grading to that of standards based grading. Of concern was that no timeline or mention of policy or rule changes were noted in the plan of the transition mentioned to being able for the student to progress or earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. There was no evidence cited of any current curriculum, class, or activities which support this as being actively supported in the system. It was also not evident in the plan that current mastery could be done in multiple compatible ways through electronic or other portfolios at the current time either online or off.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Moderate Evidence overall was presented regarding the LEA and school data related infrastructure to support personalized learning. Evident in the plan was the that Project U will give all students, educators, and parent's equal and appropriate technology hardware at no cost to access web-based learning, self-assessment, and reporting of achievement. Students who are identified as having specific needs will be provided extra supports to ensure their success and if access from home and if they can't then mobile hotspots and airtime cards will be provided. Table was provided regarding parents receiving training regarding access to student data and school services. Educators will receive training and summer paid supported training opportunities. Online tutorials will also be provided to all of the web site visitors. Through the web based system students and parents will interact and gather information about the student's college and career goals. There was no evidence or clear discussion of how parents could export data in different formats for the system and interoperable of the data was also not clearly ensured in the plan.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Moderate Evidence was presented by the applicant regarding a high quality continuous improvement process plan. A table was provided that included the specific goal, activity, and continuous improvement process that included timelines and purpose of the activities. There were only two goals mentioned 1. An enhanced curriculum and formative assessments will be vertically aligned and mapped to state standards and assessments providing every Roane County student with a personalized learning experience informed by individual skills and goals and 2. All District educators will meet state standards for highly effective teachers and principals. Responsible parties were also included in the plan and even included what they would do if the activity did not succeed. Much of the focus of the continuous improvement plan was contingent on the educator. Although the student and parent were included as a part of the activities, it was not clear evident how their voice was being collected, heard, and impacting the improvement process. Evidence was also not readily provided regarding any current accessing monitoring and measuring. No evidence was shared regarding publicly sharing of any information.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strong Evidence of the engagement of internal stakeholders through weekly PLC meetings, annual partner planning meeting, cadre & district-wide meetings during teacher work days, and electronic bulletin boards and for external stakeholders that include parents will be engaged through annual goal setting, grade band transitions, back-to-school orientation, district website, school newsletters, and the personalized learning devices. A critical stakeholder not mentioned in the plan included the ongoing communication and engagement of the Board Of Education and any parent teacher organizations or groups.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Moderate Evidence was provided regarding achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures for 14 measures. The additional 2 measures cited beyond the required 12 included Safe and Supportive Schools measured with the S3 and Student Engagement as measured by the IPI. Inclusion of the Student Engagement measure as a selection criterion was discussed in other sections regarding the personalized learning devices and plans, but the Safe and Supportive Schools rationale was not provided. Given the economic conditions of the community and families attending the schools it was also not evident why the goal during the Post Grant 2016-2017 school year only 27% of the students were to complete the FAFSA application if the Goal during that same time was to have 54% of the graduates attending college.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Weak Evidence of the plan to evaluate the effectiveness of funds was provided. Applicant reports traditional auditing functions will be used.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
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(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Moderate Evidence was provided regarding the costs associated with the total budget and dedicated to “Project U”. Calculations of the specific costs within the project budget include personnel and training stipend costs for each year of the grant. Included was an increase reflecting the increase in salary as a result of increasing years of experience based upon the state-adopted schedules with an increase of approximately two percent per year with benefits holding constant. Detailed information regarding cost assumptions and the rationale are provided. Details of the county intending to enter into a professional contract with the state-mandated assistance agency to assist in the initial implementation of the projects Technology was included. Assistance would be sought with infrastructure upgrades and device deployment and technical assistance. Given the addition of 14 new people and the rural area being served it was not evident that \$7,500 would be adequate for travel funds for conferences, professional development outside the region, and other related work in the district. Much of the work is noted as in the application will include creating curriculum and accessing university faculty for professional development. It is not evident based on the amount needed that \$50,000 per year 1 & 2 and decreasing by half for Year 3 and another half for Year 4 will be sufficient.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strong Evidence was provided by the applicant regarding a sustainability plan. Noted in the applicant’s response was the applicant seeking with and through the project to create a long-lasting change that will employ a multifaceted partner sustainability plan. This plan includes building local capacity, forming long term partnerships, increasing public funding, and pursuing private resources. Project U envisions creating increasing local capacity within the District by training educators to become high performing teachers. RTT-D funds will allow us to make an up-front investment in professional development including contracting with high quality providers and offering summer teaching contracts. These providers will transfer knowledge and skills to Roane County’s teachers and administrators for long-term sustainability. Additionally the applicant is exploring additional private and public funds to sustain the project beyond the current grant funding. A concern is that the university partnership discussed throughout the application is not mentioned as a potential strong partner in the sustainability plan.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Competitive Preference Priority section provides details a partnerships in both narrative and in a letters of support with Save the Children, a leading national 501c3 non-profit organization that has provided high-quality early childhood education, supplemental literacy, nutrition, and physical activity programming in the district. The program also offers parent-child developmental learning groups, literacy program; teen parent support groups, and child developmental screenings and community referrals. The state Office of Early Learning also provides a comprehensive evaluation for Universal Pre-K programs in the county. Project U will work with Birth to five providers to promote early identification and delivery of early intervention services for children before transitioning to public school. Additional partners evident in the narrative and in letters of support include the Rural School and Community Trust, Apple, The Friends of the Roane County Libraries, Roane-Jackson Technical Center, and even Roane County students. The applicant also shared that as part of the Project U initiative, the District will establish parent action committees (PACs) in each school. The operation of PACs will use resources braided from the grant and existing Title I programming. Title I will provide for the parent resource coordinators to organize and facilitate activities to include parents in the decision-making processes that directly impact student achievement.</p> <p>Project U has identified the following desired population level results: Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school; Students are proficient in core academic subjects; Students successfully transition from middle school grades to high school; Youth graduate from high school; Students are healthy; Families and Community members support learning in Roane County Schools; and Students have access to 21st century learning tools. Indicators result, and responsible partners are all noted. In addition Project U serving all the students in the district will partner with state Department of Early Learning to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of children that includes the data for academic, family and community support targeted indicators. Partnerships like this will create feedback and guidance to the project on addressing non-academic student issues and be connected to the appropriate services. A collaborative team strategy with County, School, and parent engagement teams will use professional learning community structures to support the grant.</p> <p>Overall, Strong Evidence was provided regarding the partnerships currently established in the district and how they will benefit the Project U plan and success. Partnerships include early learning, business, libraries, and social service agencies. Educational and other outcome results are provided for 6 desired results of the project. Partnerships and their responsibility and measures were also provided and it</p>		

was discussed that data would be analyzed and results shared. The applicant also shared that parents are considered a central partner in the project. Missing Evidence was how current partnerships like that of Marshall University, Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), GEAR-UP, Boy Scouts, and Solution Tree would fit into this plan.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Evidence was met for Project U regarding Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments.

Project U is building on the core educational areas to teaching that focuses on identifying the individual skill sets of each student and creating a personalized goal-setting program throughout the child's academic career. This will be achieved through intensive and ongoing professional development for all teachers. This professional development will be aligned with a structured, real-time student data environment to ensure that each learner has a personal road map to college and career success.

Total	210	135
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	7

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Roane School District 53% of third grade students scored below proficient in Reading/Language Arts in 2010- 2011. No summer programs are provided to these students and many of them lack the resources and opportunities to have quality enrichment experiences. To mitigate this summer loss and increase academic achievement, Project U requests funding for Literacy Boost, an initiative that will provide research-based learning activities in out-of-school settings. Literacy Boost will serve Roane County students whose skill sets indicate they are struggling in reading. The goal of the Literacy Boost Initiative is to increase 240 students in K-6 with high quality time enrichment programming in an out-of-school time learning opportunity. Roane School District will sub-grant supplementary education services to an eligible service provider. Project U staff will co-develop and release a Request for Proposal (RFP). Goals, plan, activities, responsibility, and measures are all highlighted in the plan for the summer reading program. Implementation timelines and deliverables were also provided along with a detailed evaluation plan to evaluate effectiveness and costs in the budget appear reasonable.

Moderate Evidence overall is provided for the Optional Budget Supplement request. The request clearly aligns and supports the Project U activities and the request also has evidence based on the reading levels of the need for the program. Additionally based upon the rural location of the district and experiences of the students in the summer enrichment activities to potentially mitigate reading loss would be beneficial. Also evident is that Literacy Boost Initiative will address 240 students in K-6 with high quality time enrichment programming in an out-of-school time learning opportunity and measures will be put in place to evaluate impact on an ongoing basis. While the Learning Boost RFP approved provider will align with Roane School District programs, it was not evident how the plan would be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs as required by the supplement.

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form



Application #0428WV-3 for Roane County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RCSD addresses ways to help improve student achievement, yet it lacks discussion within the comprehensive plan of what their vision is for the future. It is unclear as to a credible approach in its goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support that is grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. While providing some evidence the applicant does not present a comprehensive vision of where they propose to be. Based on the discussion provided, this section is placed in the medium range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is a discussion on the selection of six schools to participate including the total number of students to be served and meeting the competition's eligibility requirements, yet it lacks the process used in this selection process. Targeted students come from low-income families who are high-need students.</p> <p>It lacks narrative to help explain the details of the comprehensive plan. The section was rated at the medium range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RCSD discusses the reform needed that will cause change within the district-wide participating schools. The plan calls for the improvement of student-learning outcomes for all students who will be served.</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence of discussion as to how this proposal will be scaled up, causing it to result in a meaningful reform to support district-wide changes beyond the selected participating schools. This section is rated in the medium level.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's vision addresses the need for the improvement of student learning and performance increase. The performance assessments presented in table format, lacks a narrative to help explain and give a clearer understanding. College enrollment rates are also presented but found lacking a narrative that would help to explain this data. Failure to fully meet the criteria places this section in the medium range.</p>		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A clear four-year record of success is found lacking, which would demonstrate the advancement of student learning. Found lacking is a discussion of how issues of educational improvements and student learning outcomes is proposed to be achieved which would lead to closing</p>		

the achievement gap, resulting in raising student achievement and high school graduation. Although RCSD proposes to serve low-income families to primarily improve student-learning outcomes. Ambitious reforms are discussed which will cover all the schools within their district, targeting its lowest-achieving schools first.

The section was found to be within the medium range.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

RCSD addresses the level of transparency endorses with the financial statements being made public, which include school total deposits and receipts. Individual salaries of all persons paid are also made public. Reports have been included in the appendix. Insufficient information is supplied to help clarify the process of publishing financial information. This section falls within the medium range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

RCSD states that there is sufficient autonomy given implement the personalized learning environments as described in the proposal. The explanation is found to be weak therefore placing this in the medium score range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

RCSD invited students, parents and teachers to participate in the development of the proposal. Letters of support served as evidence that addressed their collaborative efforts. Teachers were the primary source of information and revisions based on their discussions and feedback. Based on the information stated, this section falls within the medium range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

While there is some evidence presented, the applicant does not present a compelling high-quality plan, which addresses the implementation of personalized learning environment and the logic behind the reformed proposal including the identification of the needs and gaps. Based on the information supplied this section is given a medium score.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The plan discusses an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students. While there is some evidence presented, the applicant does not present a compelling high-quality plan, addressing the implementation of personalized learning environment and the logic behind the reformed proposal including the identification of the needs and gaps. Based on the information supplied this section is given a medium score.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

RCSD states goals that will ensure that children are prepared from the start of their academic career to high school graduation and beyond. The outcome goals matrix provided identifies goals, activities, deliverables, timeline and the responsible person who will oversee each specific task.

The plan of implementation is unclear on the instructional strategies to be used with the participating students, details on how to achieve

this are lacking (e.g., discussion and collaborative work, project-based learning, videos, audio, manipulates). While there is some evidence presented, the plan fails to clearly address the highly effective leadership of principal and staff.

Based on the above information, this section merits a medium score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Evidence of an infrastructure including a new district leadership and school improvement team is presented, but it failures to present policies that are in place for this infrastructure.</p> <p>Sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators, and school-level budgets are mentioned as being in place, yet again details are not stated, therefore fails to show a comprehensive plan.</p> <p>Based on the information provided in this section a medium score is assigned.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Insufficient information is presented addressing the accessibility of the necessary tools, and ensuring that students, parents, and educators have appropriate levels of technical support. There is mention made of an online portal for parents to monitor student progress and WV Writes, an electronic writing program will be the main vehicle to provide immediate feedback.</p> <p>RCSD high quality plans to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure providing every student, educator and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. Assurances that all participating students, parents, educators will have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources. This section is rated high as it addresses major areas that will help lead the district to accomplish their goals.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RCSD supplies information reflecting goals, activities and a continuous improvement progress timeline along with benchmark dates providing opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.</p> <p>The plan does not address the rigor called for in the ongoing adjustments that will need to take place during and after the grant. The strategy fails to address how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District. The score of medium is recorded.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Evidence of strategies are noted and in place to maintain communication with all internal and external stakeholders. Awarding this a score of high.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

RCSD has identified ten achievable performance measures, which are displayed in an organizational chart showing the applicable population, subgroups, baseline year and projected percentage rate of success. Performance measures are geared to the specific grade level as well as target population.

Although the above information is in place, there is a lack of clarity on how it will review and improve the measure over time. A medium score has been assigned.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

RCSD discusses the need to make the necessary adjustments and revisions during the implementation portion of this project. There is also discussion on the need to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top- District funded activities. A set plan to evaluate the effectiveness remains unclear and presented in multiple areas of the proposal making it difficult and unclear to follow. A medium score was assigned to this section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides descriptions of partnerships formed, which are linked to support the proposed design. There is an assessment of the needs and assets of the participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the overall education of student participants. A decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports are part of the overall plan. A decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports is not clearly defined, placing this in the medium scale.</p> <p>The applicant includes a budget narrative along with tables that show the project-level itemized costs along with a cost description, cost assumption, and total budget requested for each of the four years. Budget reflects a reasonable amount covering the cost of a technology coordinator and technology assistant who will provide technology support to students and teacher. Another cost to cover a project director and three district facilitators. Funding to cover travel, equipment, supplies, start up costs and training stipends. Additional monies will be sought from private and national foundations that have interest in funding high quality programs.</p> <p>The applicant fails to demonstrate a rationale for the investments that will ensure a long-term sustainability of the RttT efforts. This section the score rate is medium.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RCSD discusses the need for sustainability to be carried out beyond federal assistance. There is a plan to employ a multifaceted partner sustainability plan, which will include building local capacity, forming long-term partnerships, increasing public funding, and pursuing private resources. Deficiencies are found in the financial commitments from state and local government leaders, receiving a medium score for this section.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	4
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides descriptions of partnerships formed, which could be linked to support the proposed design. Earlier mention of these partnerships fails to be reflected in the overall plan. The integration of public or private resources to augment the schools' resources by</p>		

providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students is not reflected throughout the plan. The competitive preference receives a low score.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The overall approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students has not been clearly presented throughout the proposal. While there is some evidence presented, a compelling high-quality plan addressing the implementation of personalized learning environment designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards.

It lacks clarity as to a credible approach in its goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support that is grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. A four-year record of success was not presented, which would demonstrate the advancement of student learning. it lacks discussion within the comprehensive plan of what the vision is for the future.

The absolute priority 1 is addressed with ambiguity

Based on the information supplied this section is given a medium score.

Total	210	130
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